

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-7 and 9-20 are rejected.

Claim 8 is objected to.

Claims 2, 9-11, and 18-20 have been amended.

No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-20 are pending.

Acknowledgement of Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 8 recites allowable subject matter but is objected to for being dependent on a rejected claim. However, Applicants respectfully submit that in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, all claims are in condition for allowance.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner has noted that the references numbered BC (JP-11-5558-A), BD (JP-2747701-B2), BF (JP-2-41468-B2), BG (JP-11-318005-A), and BH (JP-3-15268-U) cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on July 12, 2005 ("IDS") have not been considered. The Examiner asserts that the IDS fails to comply with 37 C.F. R. §1.98(a)(3) because a concise explanation of the relevance of the references was not included. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's assertion.

The above references were cited in the International Search Report for PCT/JP2004/001657 ("ISR") which Applicants had submitted with the IDS filed on July 12, 2005. The MPEP states that the submission of an English-version of a search report citing the reference satisfies the requirement for a concise explanation of relevance:

Where the information listed is not in the English language, but was cited in a search report or other action by a foreign office in a counterpart foreign application, the requirement for a concise explanation of relevance can be satisfied by submitting an English-language version of the search report or action which indicates the degree of relevance found by the foreign office. This may be an explanation of which portion of the reference is particularly relevant, to which claims it applies, or merely an "X", "Y", or "A" indication on a search report. MPEP §609.04(a).

Applicants have attached copies of the ISR (attached as **Exhibit A**) and the Notice of Acceptance of Application Under 35 U.S.C. §371 and 37 C.F.R. §1.495, Confirmation No. 3077, indicating receipt of a copy of the ISR (attached as **Exhibit B**). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the Applicants have satisfied the requirement for submitting a concise explanation of relevance as designated in 37 C.F.R. §1.98(a)(3) for the above-references, and respectfully request that the Examiner consider the references and so indicate on the PTO/SB/08 filed on July 12, 2005. A copy of the PTO/SB/08 listing the references has been provided for the Examiner's use, attached as **Exhibit C**.

Objection to Drawings

The drawings are objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.83(a) for failing to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that "the means for developing the reference manipulation force" and "a walker" are not shown in the figures. Through the above amendments, the limitation of "means for developing the reference manipulation force" is no longer claimed, rendering the objection moot.

Additionally, Applicants respectfully disagree with Examiner's assertion that a walker is not shown in the figures. A walker is shown by the object denoted by reference numeral 1 in Figures 1A, 1B, and 1C. This is also supported by the detailed description. "In these drawings, numeral 1 designates the mobile object, for example a push car (electric cart) and a walker...." Paragraph [0040]. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

Claim Objections

Claims 9-11 and 18-20 are objected to for various informalities. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that the preamble of each of the dependent claims 9-11 and 18-20 does not recite the same structure as the independent claim from which it depends. To address the objection, claims 9-11, and 18-20 have been amended to be in independent form, rendering the objection moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to claims 9-11, and 18-20 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 2 and 12-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly the claimed the subject matter. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that there is no corresponding structure provided for the "means for developing the reference manipulating force." The above amendments have deleted the limitation of "means for developing the reference manipulating force," rendering the rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 2, and 12-20 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-7, 9, 12-16, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent JP-8-142873 to Satoshi ("Satoshi"). The Examiner asserts that Satoshi discloses each and every element of the above claims. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Independent claim 1 recites a force input manipulator comprising an applied force detector, and an operation mode selector which decides a reference manipulating force and selects a corresponding operation mode. Satoshi does not teach or suggest these elements.

Satoshi does not teach or suggest a system that detects manipulation forces, selects a reference manipulation force, and selects a corresponding operation mode. Rather, Satoshi describes a grip for control levers that includes an actuation detector and a mode selector that operates based a detected tilt of the lever.

The Examiner asserts that the actuation detector of Satoshi is comparable to the applied force detector of the present invention. However, the actuation detector of Satoshi only detects the direction and angle of the *tilt* of the lever. *See, Satoshi, Paragraphs [0015]-[0018]*. In contrast, the applied force detector of the present invention detects a manipulating force, which may include a force applied in the Y-axis or the X-axis. *See, Specification, Paragraphs [0042]-[0043]*.

Furthermore, Satoshi does not disclose the operation mode selector which “decides a reference manipulating force... and selects the operation mode corresponding to the decided reference manipulating force” as recited in claim 1. In Satoshi, the direction and speed is dependent on the direction of tilt and the magnitude of tilt. This results because the tilt signal from the actuation detector is output to the wheels to set the steering angle, and the angle detected by the actuation detector is used to determine the drive rate of the wheels. *See, Satoshi, Paragraphs [0017], [0018], and [0020]*. In contrast, the present invention includes storing a plurality of reference manipulating forces in memory, selecting a reference manipulating force for each manipulating force detected by the applied force detector, and selecting a mode of operation associated with the selected reference manipulating force. This allows the plurality of reference manipulating forces and the modes of operation to be customized for an individual based on the individual’s directional tendencies in applying the manipulating force in a certain directions, or the amount of force the individual is able to apply.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Claims 2-7, and 12-16 depend from claim 1. Therefore, for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, claims 2-7, and 12-16 are not anticipated by Satoshi. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 2-7, and 12-16 be withdrawn.

Independent claims 9 and 18 recite features similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above, claims 9 and 18 are not anticipated by Satoshi. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 16 and 17 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 10 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Satoshi in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,276,469 to Smith (“Smith”).

Claims 10 and 19 recite features similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 1, and Smith does not cure the deficiencies of Satoshi. Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 10 and 19 be withdrawn.

Claims 11 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Satoshi in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,524,720 to Lathrop (“Lathrop”).

Claims 11 and 20 recite features similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 1, and Lathrop does not cure the deficiencies of Satoshi. Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 11 and 20 be withdrawn.

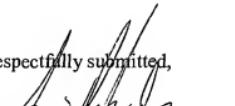
CONCLUSION

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below if the Examiner believes any issue can be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment. In view of the above amendment, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
Louis J. DeFuidice
Registration No.: 47,522
DARBY & DARBY P.C.
P.O. Box 770
Church Street Station
New York, New York 10008-0770
(212) 527-7700
(212) 527-7701 (Fax)
Attorney For Applicants